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one of the characters in the play, speaks of "old Menaphon," in a sense which must be interpreted as "well known" or "popular," since Menaphon is distinctly represented by Greene as a youth. The term "old" was in that day somewhat rarely used in this sense, but it is found several times in Shakespeare and so may be thus construed here.<sup>4</sup> If it is so construed, it suggests that the play builds on some lapse of time since the appearance of the romance, and upon an accumulated popularity of the hero of the latter. This, of course, gives no basis for exact inference as to the date of our play, but it at least suggests that the latter may not have followed very close on the romance. That it belongs to a time anywhere approaching the date of its publication, no one will be at all likely to believe.

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#### ON THE EDITING OF CHAUCER'S MINOR POEMS.

Among the manuscripts which preserve to us the shorter poems of Chaucer, three are of peculiar interest. They are all contained in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and are marked respectively Fairfax 16, Bodley 638, and Tanner 346; their Chaucerian texts are printed by the Chaucer Society, and are thus accessible to every student.

Examination of the contents of these mss. shows a relationship even more striking than editors of the separate poems have noted. Tanner and Bodley, the two smaller mss., agree very closely in their contents, and their list is paralleled with equal closeness by the first portion of the larger Fairfax volume. All three are, however, independently transcribed, though evidence shows that while Fairfax and Bodley are derived almost entire from one common original (which I shall call FB), Tanner was copied from another codex, either the ancestor or the sister of FB. Of the three Tanner, written by several hands, is the poorest, but Fairfax and Bodley, each written by

one man, are equally careful transcriptions of an original as good as they; while the excellence of their texts shows that the ultimate ancestor of all three codices (which I shall call Oxford), must have been as sound as its worthiest descendants, Tanner's degenerations being of its own introduction.

The lost Fairfax-Bodley, a codex containing at least 17 poems, can therefore be reconstructed with clearness, and its texts of the Minor Poems established; while the lost ancestor Oxford, containing at least 11 entries, can also be reconstructed with a high degree of probability, unless proof of contamination with another type should be adduced.

For two poems by Chaucer this group-solidarity is very important, the *Book of the Duchess* and the *House of Fame*. The former poem remains to us in these three Oxford mss. alone, the latter only in Fairfax, Bodley, and the degenerate Pepys 2006, see *Mod. Lang. Notes*, xix, 196. An editor of either of these poems or a student of Chaucer's four-beat verse should therefore reconstruct either Oxford or Fairfax-Bodley as his text; but when he has accomplished this, he has obtained the readings of only one type of mss. Should emendation seem necessary, it must be made from knowledge of the usual trend of error in FB or in Oxford, and that knowledge can only be obtained from a reconstruction of all the texts contained in the lost codices.

The frequent procedure of editors has been a spring from the existing copies to a lost archetype "X"; but in this Oxford Group of mss. we have material for another mode of treatment, the distinct conception of each individual copyist and his weaknesses. Were full noting of the scribe's peculiarities carried out also for the remarkable Cambridge ms. Gg iv 27, the direct antagonist of the Oxford type, we should have material for a final opinion on the text of one of the Minor Poems, the *Purlement of Foules*; at least, we should be better able to judge which type may have preserved Chaucer's retouchings. Cambridge's possession of the unique version of the prologue to the *Legend of Good Women* is balanced by Oxford's preservation of the *Book of the Duchess* and the *House of Fame*; Oxford's inclusion of non-Chaucerian poems is paralleled by Cambridge's inclusion of the *Temple of Glass*, etc.;

<sup>4</sup>I am indebted to Dr. Percy W. Long, formerly of Bryn Mawr College, for this explanation.

and if we assert Chaucerian retouchings of the *Parlement of Foules* for Cambridge, what shall we do with the peculiar *Anelida* readings of Oxford, part of which Skeat adopts and part of which he passes by, with a sureness of instinct especially his own?

The great value of the Oxford Group lies, then, in the clearness with which each step of its descent can be traced, and the certainty with which we can work back to a ms. two degrees nearer Chaucer than the existing volumes. The value of Cambridge is still unproven. It contains that version of the prologue to the *Legend* which according to much recent argument is the later, copies of the *Troilus* and of the *Canterbury Tales* which are not of the earlier type in either case (this I must elsewhere establish for the *Canterbury Tales*), a copy of Lydgate's *Temple of Glass* which Schick thinks has been altered by other hands, and a text of the *Parlement of Foules* which Koch treats as containing corrections direct from Chaucer. There is no parallelization of the two types, Oxford and Cambridge, except in this one poem; but an assertion such as Koch's is untenable until Cambridge as a personality has been conjured up before students and the contact of his ms. with Chaucer proved. Until the man Gg has been realized for us on the one hand and the ample material for the reconstruction of Oxford used on the other, we shall still speak in hypotheses regarding the text of the Minor Poems.

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### SIREN-MERMAID.

In the twelfth book of the *Odyssey*, the Sirens are somewhat vaguely described as two creatures that sit in an island-meadow, and enchant men with their clear song. In Euripides, *Helena*, 172, they are "winged maidens" (πτεροφόροι νεάνιδες). In various other classical writers, and regularly in ancient Greek and Roman art, they are part woman, part bird. See Anaxilas, quoted in Athenaeus XIII, 558 C; Apollonius Rhodius, *Arg.*, IV, 898-9; Ovid, *Metam.*, V, 553; Hera-

clitus, *De Incredibil.*, 14; Hyginus, *Fab.*, 125 and 141; Pliny, *N. H.*, X, 49, 70; Pausanias, IX, 343; Ausonius, *Griph. Tern. Num.*, 21; Servius, ad *Aen.*, V, 864; Claudian, *Rapt. Proserp.*, III, 254; Fulgentius, *Mythol.*, II, 8; Isidore, *Orig.*, XI, 3, 30; Baumeister, *Denkmäler des klassischen Altertums*, III, 1642 ff.; J. E. Harrison, *Myths of the Odyssey in Art and Literature*, pp. 146 ff.; G. Weicker, *Der Seelenvogel in der alten Litteratur und Kunst*, pp. 93 ff. In Plato's Vision of Er, *Rep.*, 617B, "upon each of the circles of the spindle is mounted a Siren" (ἐφ' ἐκάστου βεβηκέναι Σειρήνα). And the writers of the Septuagint felt free to substitute "siren" for "ostrich," *Micah*, I, 8, καὶ πένθος ὡς θυγατέρων σειρήνων.

In our earlier English poetry the Siren is regularly a mermaid. In his *Old English Miscellany* (EETS. 49), Dr. R. Morris prints a Bestiary which comes from a ms. of about the middle of the thirteenth century. Under the heading 'Natura Sirene,' it describes the "mereman" as "half man and half fis." See, also, the *Gest Historiale* of the Destruction of Troy, 13272-3,

fro the navell netherward noght but a fishe  
And made as a maidon fro the myddes vp;

Chaucer, *Nonne Preestes Tale*, 450 ff.; *Romaunt of the Rose*, 682-4,

Though we mermaydens clepe hem here  
In English, as in our usaunce,  
Men clepen hem sereyns in Fraunce;

Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, I, 487-91,

Of body bothe and of visage  
Lik unto wommen of yong age  
Up fro the Navele on hih thei be,  
And doun benethe, as men mai se,  
Thei bere of fisshes the figure;

Shakespeare, *Comedy of Errors*, III, 2. 45-47; Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, II, 12, 31. Lyly's Syren, *Loves Metamorphosis*, IV, 2. 30, is "halfe fish, halfe flesh." In Boethius, *Consol.*, I, prosa I, Chaucer translates "sirenae" by "mermaids." In Alexander Barclay's third Eglogue, "Mayr-maydes singing, abusing with their song," are mentioned among the dangers of the sea. Robert Greene speaks, in his *Mamillia*, of "Ulysses and the Mermaides," and so does Sir John Davies, in his *Soule of Man*. In William Browne's *Inner Temple Masque*, we have a return to classical au-